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THE

VIOLIN MANUFACTURE IN ITALY

AND ITS

GERMAN ORIGIN.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH;

BY

DR. EDMUND SCHEBEK.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

"In presenting to the public a translation of Dr. Schebek's excellent little sketch, no apology is needed, the name of its author being sufficient guarantee of its scientific value. It will be found to contain much that is highly original, and likely to be of considerable use in the compilation of future histories of the Italian violin manufacture."
—W. E. L.

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THE

VIOLIN MANUFACTURE IN ITALY,

AND

ITS GERMAN ORIGIN.

ALTHOUGH the Italian violin manufacture is universally known from its chief seat, Cremona; yet it is by no means free from obscurity: and to this fact may doubtless be attributed much of the importance which has attached to it. Instead of seeking for natural explanation, recourse has been had to mystery, around

which tradition and legend have woven a veil.

Certainly it is extraordinary that through the Praxis alone a violin model could be created, which, while offering beauty of form, and an easy manner of performance, should prove, with regard to richness and power of tone, to be the best which can be invented, notwithstanding the numerous endeavours which have been made, accompanied in part by the most rigorous and ingenious scientific enquiry. Even the preparation of the Italian lac—upon which such store is set by amateurs and collectors, and which, for colour, fire, and transparency, has never been equalled—must be regarded as a secret.

It seems, however, erroneous to ascribe to any peculiarity of manipulation in the manufacture, the superiority of tone which characterises the Cremonese instruments, seeing that the rules adhered to in their construction have been made quite clear to observant and thoughtful masters of the craft by means of disjointed specimens; and experience teaches us that modern instruments constructed on similar principles, would, in the course of time, equal them in tone, and facile tone production. The chief difficulty with which the modern violin manufacture has to contend, is one which, unfortunately, it has to some extent itself engendered, and which arises from the fact that it can-

not raise itself to any real importance, nor, consequently, to a lasting and vigorous productiveness.

During the hundred years which have elapsed since the decline of the classical violin manufacture in Italy, new instruments have continuously been produced; but can they be considered to fill the gap which the Italians have left? This may reasonably be doubted. It is not to be denied, that, amongst these results, there is much that is excellent; but, on the whole, the period has been one of experiment. A leading principle has been wanting, like the well preserved tradition which the old Italian masters adhered to the whole time. Many

thought to make them better, and deviated from the right path; and, moreover, a method was discovered of imitating the great Italian masters, and instruments were prepared which, unlike those that had once left their hands, had the appearance of Italian violins of a hundred years old and more, in a worn-out and even damaged condition. In order to make these new productions similar to the old ones in delicacy of tone and easy intonation, it was the custom to reduce the thickness of back and belly, to macerate, or artificially dry the wood, whereby the instrument was robbed of its power to sustain for any length of time the violent shaking to which, as a resona-

ting body, it was subjected by the vibrations; in consequence of which, the tone of such instruments gradually deteriorated. In this manner, the new instruments fell into disrepute, not excepting those that were well and scientifically made, and the demand for well-preserved instruments from the inheritance of the Italians, became consequently greater and more exclusive. But how much longer will this continue? Even bow instruments, however great their durability when carefully used, must eventually yield in time, and accident and ignorance hasten their destruction. It now appears to be high time to make a further effort. Here it may be re-

marked, in order to avoid misunderstanding, that no reference is intended to the instruments in ordinary demand, the provision in this respect already sufficing, but rather to perfected instruments, such as one required for higher solo performance and chamber music. Concerning the method which is to be followed in their construction, no doubt need exist, after the many fruitless experiments and enquiries. There is but one way of attaining to the desired end, which is, to follow in the footsteps of those of the old masters who have left us the best examples with regard to the choice of wood, form, construction, and finish, whereby it is not prohibited—nay, it is desirable—to

make in the minor details such alterations as the development of violin virtuosity and the higher pitch of the present day have rendered necessary. The unavoidable self-denial which will be required of the makers, must be met by the confidence of the purchasers, for supply and demand stand in the most intimate relations to one another; where the one relaxes, the other must also fail.

For these reasons, the propagation of correct views concerning the violin manufacture, and its development, has also a practical side; indeed, it is the inevitable condition supposed in raising it again to that elevation which, strangely enough, it occupied at a time when the demand for perfect instru-

ments was neither so extensive nor intensive by far as it is at the present day.*

Such was the intended object of the

* In order to avoid an accusation of plagiarism, I may here be allowed to remark that, in my report concerning the orchestral instruments in the Paris Exhibition of 1855 (the twenty-seventh book of the official reports of Austria), I have already given to the world, in a more extended form, my views upon violin manufacture. This report has been most freely quoted from by Hiacinthe Abele, in his work, *Die Violine*, without the acknowledgment which he accords in other instances. Whole pages are cited verbally from my pamphlet, and have, in part, been reproduced in other works bearing his name. Under these circumstances, it is by no means impossible that the authorship might be falsely attributed, seeing, moreover, that my report, as part of a large and but little circulated collection, has not become well known in musical circles.

show of Cremonese instruments which, at my incitation, was to have formed part of the plan of the Vienna Exhibition. Assisted by a material such as is otherwise unattainable, the idea was to lay before the most celebrated instrument makers and musicians, and such physicists as had sifted and led to the solution of debateable questions in this province, the instruments thus collected illustrating the development of the classical violin manufacture as a whole, and in its various schools and masters; and, at the same time, as far as might be possible, to clear up the still so obscure history of this branch of art, and its representatives. This special collection did not take place, though

not, fortunately, because of any difficulties which existed in the nature of the undertaking; therefore, one need not relinquish the hope of seeing, sooner or later, under more favourable circumstances, the realization of the idea.

Although based upon no great selection of instruments, a reference to the progress, and to the part which individual masters, or whole schools, have taken in it, is attended with considerable uncertainty. Being unable to comprehend the general coherency, people are not in a position to judge correctly of cause and effect. Hereby is not to be overlooked the fact, that instruments which proceeded from one

and the same workshop were not always equally good or well finished; even masters of minor repute have turned out magnificent specimens; while, on the other hand, the Coryphæ have sometimes fallen behind their usual excellence in some point or other. If we make the peculiarities which we observe in any one instrument which happens to be at hand a matter for generalization, errors become naturally unavoidable, and representations made after this manner by pretended authorities who wish to appear more learned than they really are, find a ready circulation, and, after a time, become difficult to eradicate. Lastly, a general terminology is necessary, in

order that the same ideas may always be expressed in the same language. In all these respects it appears hardly possible to dispense with special exhibitions of Cremonese instruments. Different is it with the superficial history of the violin manufacture, inasmuch as this is reflected in the lives of its representatives, and in the results of an active trade. Here, at least, the material for a future erection may be collected. The following remarks concerning the province to be explored may serve as a guide.

The original form from which the violin and other instruments of the same family—viola, violoncello, and contra-bass—are derived, is very

simple, and is found at the present day under the name of Omerti and Ravanstrom in India, and of Rebab or Rebec in Java and Arabia. In all probability these instruments—if, according to our present ideas, they merit the name—were introduced into Europe under the many modifications of the original form which they had acquired amongst various tribes at the time of the migration of the Indo-Germanic races. Even now we find varieties of them in use; for instance, the Gusle of the Servians and the Russian Goudok. To two, apparently, of these original types does it seem possible to trace back the origin of the violin, viz., to the Crwth of the ancient Britons and the Rebec,

which, without doubt, passed through Spain into France. Centuries elapsed, however, and a vast number of sometimes very extraordinary transformations were necessary before the violin acquired its existing form. Of these ancient varieties we are in possession of a compendious pattern-list derived from carvings in old churches and sketches in ancient manuscripts. The viola was the instrument of transition, which in its turn passed through many metamorphoses before it acquired a settled form. One can without difficulty picture to one's self this form of the viola; for, by reason of the flat back, and, towards the neck more pointed than rounded body, and the

broad sides, it greatly resembled our contra-bass, or the viola d'amour, which, by the way, threatens to become a rarity. Sometimes the sides were only curved, like those of the guitar, in intimate association with voices to accompany which, they came more and more into use. Violas were divided into four kinds, viz., treble, alto, tenor, and bass, which were held during performance either at the shoulder or between the knees—hence the term "shoulder violin" (Viola di Spalte, Viola di Braccio, the origin of the German word, Bratsche), and "knee violin" (Viola da Gamba). The bass viola alone, which still exists in a slightly modified form, as the contra-

bass, was played, like this instrument, in a free position.

The manufacture of viols of the old sort continued for a considerable time after the new model for violins, violas and violoncellos, had been introduced, a proof that the flat whizzing tone, which necessarily resulted from its outer form and inner structure, in which often the indispensable bass-bar was wanting, continued to be admired for a long time, before the clear, brilliant, powerful and sonorous tone of the new instruments usurped the monarchy.

Although Galileo, in his "Dialogues," says—"The violin, and the bass or violoncello, were invented by

the Italians—perhaps by the Neapolitans (?)," still the statement is open to doubt. In ancient times England displayed great activity in the production of instruments played with the bow, at the same time seeking out, and renumerating freely, performers upon the violin and viola. Is it not possible that the metamorphosis from the original bow instruments to the violin took place in that country? Further, it is by no means improbable that the violin was introduced into Italy from Germany; for there were masters whose names hint at a German extraction by whom the manufacture of the violin proper was first cultivated in Italy. The history of ancient commerce is in

both countries too obscure to admit of positive proof of this. It is nevertheless certain, that the oldest known violins were made in Italy.

It has been customary, hitherto, to regard Brescia as the cradle of the Italian violin manufacture; but, while this opinion was based upon Gaspar da Salo (circa 1560-1610), it was incorrect. Later enquiries, to which a violin bearing the name "Joan Kerlino, 1449," gave rise, proved that a maker of that name had lived in Brescia, whereby the above opinion received a justification. On the other hand, Bologna must be accredited with the honour of having been the cradle of a branch of human art industry which, in its pro-

ductiveness and constantly progressive development, was no less wonderful; for from this town a master, known hitherto by the name of Gasparo Duiffoprugcar, sent forth—from the year 1511, upwards—a series of violins no less remarkable for their technical excellence than for their external beauty.

Simultaneously with Bologna, both Mantua, Verona, and Venice furnished bow instruments; but, from specimens which have been preserved in museums, these appear to have principally consisted of violas of the old species.

Towards the middle of the 16th century, the violin manufacture in Brescia, under Gaspar da Salo, came

again to the fore; and it also took firm root in Cremona, through Andrea Amati, who was the progenitor of a highly celebrated family of violin makers which flourished throughout four generations.

Brescia adheres, in the principles of construction and external elaboration, to the line laid down by Duiffoprugcar; but Cremona, although starting from the same point, strikes out an independent path; so, at least, under Antonius and Hieronymus, sons of Andrea, and Nicholas (born 1596, died 1684,) son of Hieronymus. The forms become ennobled, and sometimes considerably smaller, the breasts are more arched; and, at the same time, the

purely external ornamentation is dispensed with, while particular attention is given to the choice of wood and varnish. The tone is distinguished more by sweetness than grandeur. The reform brought about by Amati was adopted more or less by the rest of the violin makers. Cremona was, from this time, the chief seat, and the high school of the violin manufacture. Even Brescia relinquished by degrees its peculiarities; and the last maker who honourably represented this town, Johann Bapt. Ruger, of Bologna, was educated in the school of the Amati.

But the ideal of the violin was not yet attained to. That was reserved

for Antonius Straduarius,* who, like Amati, sprang from an illustrious Cremonese family. A pupil of Nicholas Amati, he followed at first in the footsteps of his master; but soon struck out into new paths, in his endeavours to attain to perfection; and these endeavours occupied him more than half of his long life—he was born in 1644, and died in 1737—until, at the turn of the century, he attained to his ideal—sweetness and grandeur of tone

* The names of the various masters mentioned in this sketch, are, for the most part, Latinized; this change having, usually, been undertaken by the masters themselves. Therefore, for Antonius may be read Antonio; Hieronymus—Geronimo; Guarnerius Guarneri or Guarnerio; Straduarius—Straduari or Straduario, etc., etc.—W. E. L.

combined with perfection of form. It is generally imagined that Straduarius created something entirely new; but, in my humble opinion, all the properties which distinguished his instruments from those of earlier periods, were already in existence, but were greatly scattered; and to him is due the merit of having, with great penetration, selected everywhere that which was the best, and united it into one harmonious whole. He had a large number of pupils, and a still greater number of imitators; and some of them produced such excellent specimens, that, doubtless, at the present day many instruments are falsely ascribed to him. He did not, however, occupy the position

of master of the period in the same degree as did Amati, before him.

His most distinguished disciple, Joseph Guarnerius (born 1683, died about 1745), called *del Gesu*, after the trade-sign which he adopted to distinguish him from a cousin of the same name—adhered, in the main, to his master's precepts, but differed from him so greatly in some particulars that their instruments cannot well be confounded. Unlike his master, who consistently strove to attain to his ideal, and on doing so, faithfully adhered to it—his ideas were irregular, and so, consequently, were his productions. Sometimes he turned out instruments which were equal to the most perfect creations

of Straduarius—nay, are considered by many to be better. Paganini's favourite violin was a Guarnerius. Sometimes his productions were so inferior, as regards choice of wood and finish, that one is tempted to deny their genuineness. Guarnerius found imitators here and there, but he does not appear to have educated any pupils. According to a tradition, he ended his life in a prison.

At the time that Andrea Amati founded the new era, the manufacture of violins was carried on in several other towns besides Brescia and Cremona. But it was owing to the impulse which the works of Nicholas Amati and Straduarius gave to it that

it began to spread. Like a tree that grows in good soil, and to which Heaven sends showers and sunshine, so it sent forth its shoots and branches in all directions. In most of the large towns of Northern Italy it had a seat; and, next to Cremona, it attained to the greatest importance in Venice and Milan. From Northern Italy, it passed through Florence and Rome, to Naples and Palermo. Altogether, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the independent makers numbered about two hundred.

That which not a little assisted its advancement, was the successive inheritance by members of the same family. Before the Amati, we find, in

Venice, the Duiffoprugcars and Linarolos carrying on the trade throughout generations; and the period during which the Amati laboured in this field extended over a century and a half. Beside these, flourished the families of the Guarneri and Ruger, followed by the Guadagnini and Berganzi, each of which probably existed throughout a century. In Brescia, we meet with the families of Maggini and Zanetto; in Milan, of the Grancini, and Testore; in Venice, of the Novellos, Tononi, and Gofriller; while, in Naples, the Gagliani have continued to exist from the 17th century to the present day—latterly, however, only as string manufacturers.

Upon the tickets which they were in the habit of affixing to their productions, it was not uncommon for them to give their genealogy, thus—N.N., the son (grandson, or nephew,) of N. N. In this manner, Nicholas Amati, for instance, carries his genealogy back to his grandfather. Often the native town was named; and it was customary to mention the master, or the school—more especially if it could be referred to Cremona, and to Nicholas Amati, or Straduarius. Sometimes the names of firms, such as *Antonius and Hieronymus Amati; Fratelli Grancini*, are met with. Through such remarks, and the mention of name, place, and date, these tickets became a most important—nay,

in most cases, the only source for obtaining the history of this interesting branch of art; but, unfortunately, their use is rendered difficult by the fact that trickery has often been resorted to, whereby genuine instruments from which the proper tickets have been removed, are provided with false ones, while spurious specimens are furnished with genuine tickets. Experience and caution are therefore necessary to avoid error. The directors, etc., of museums, and of the libraries of musical societies, should regard it as a duty to assist the investigation, by securing, at every opportunity, exact copies of genuine labels.

A more certain source would be

opened up in the registers of births, marriages, and deaths. At present, this source has only been made use of with regard to the Amati, Straduari, and Guarneri, through the unwearying efforts of J. B. Vuillaume, who has regarded it as a pious duty towards his illustrious models; and by S. Ruf, who is to be accredited with similar researches respecting Stainer.

In the case then of these masters, *connoisseurs* are no longer likely to be deceived by labels of instruments dating from a time when the makers were either dead or not yet born, or were still boys at school. Such anachronisms occurred repeatedly in the announcements for the Vienna Exhibi-

tion. Even Spohr dated the demise of Straduarius at about forty years later than the actual time; consequently, as, according to Vuillaume's researches, his birth took place in the year 1644, he must have attained to the age of nearly one hundred and forty years! It were to be wished that such "historical disinfection" could be extended to the remaining representatives of the Italian violin manufacture; the history of this department would then soon secure a strong foundation. Again, in the family of Guadagnini, the existence of a certain Joannes Baptista was considered as proved beyond doubt; he was stated to have lived in the eightieth year of the last century; but the fact

was overlooked, that, a hundred years earlier, a Joannes Baptista Guadagnini worked independently; and that consequently there must have been at least two masters bearing that name. The active life of Alexander Mezzadrie, of Ferrara, was fixed between the years 1690 and 1710; but genuine instruments of his make, with genuine labels dating from the year 1616, are still in existence. Errors of this, and similar kinds—of which many instances might be mentioned, pass from one work to another, because the searching light of criticism has not yet been brought to bear upon the subject.

To root them out, there are two methods which recommend themselves.

The first of these consists in the examination of church-registers, and of such trade-registers as are still in existence. This is a task for clergymen, communal officers, keepers of archives, and local historians.

On the preparation for the Vienna Exhibition, I had, already, this and similar objects in view. The Italian Government was to have been petitioned to give the impulse—for it must be regarded as the national duty of Italy to throw more light upon a branch of art in which it attained to the highest rank. To the Germans may be recommended a similar procedure, with regard to the names of native artists, who, as we shall see here-

after, introduced the violin manufacture into Italy. Particularly should their attention be turned to the history of German lute manufacture, which, in several Bavarian towns, to wit, Nurembourg, and Munich, and perhaps also in the Tyrol, must have formerly attained to considerable development.

The second requisite is the avoidance of all generalisation—*i.e.*, nothing should be advanced with regard to which the slightest doubt exists; and, in case of uncertainty, the source should be mentioned, whereby persons are placed in a position to make further enquiries into the matter, and are not induced to grant to it a greater amount of credence than it really deserves. It

is best to mention each label, or each date, in connection with the instrument from which it is quoted, and to give the external peculiarities, referring only to the instrument on which they are apparent, and not—as a well-known writer on musical subjects, who in this province must be read with caution, has often done, namely, constructed whole periods from *one date or other*, and observed in single instruments the particular tendencies evinced by a master during a whole life, or a succession of different periods.

An excellent preparation for a reliable history of the Italian violin manufacture would be found in a statistic of those of its productions which have

been left to us—such as has already been commenced by M. Jules Gallay, of Paris. But, in such a case, the masters must be clearly denoted, and the external peculiarities of the instruments described in an unmistakable manner.

After this digression, let us return to the historical sketch of our subject.

It was but natural that the violin manufacture, which had acquired such importance in Italy, should exert an influence upon other countries. Whether Jacob Stainer (born 1621, died 1683), the celebrated master of Absam, near Innsbruck, served his apprenticeship at Cremona, as was formerly asserted, must, after the thorough researches of

his latest biographers, remain undecided. He was unable to withdraw himself from the influence of the Amati, as his—truly but seldom genuine—works (imitations, bearing the name of his firm, particularly from the old Mettenwalder manufactory, are circulated by hundreds), show. He went to greater extremes in the curve of the breasts than was justified by the model of Nicholas Amati, whereby his instruments acquired a peculiar—from the Italian—widely-differing quality of tone, more resembling that of a flute than of strings—which, however, was not wanting in beauty, and formerly enjoyed general appreciation, although at the present day it finds no favour

with artists. But in his works may be traced an independency of procedure. He understood how to render the effect of these coarser curves milder by a suitable thinness of the parts; and, further, to give the violin model a certain original individuality, by the perfect accordance of all its parts. But for all that, his imitators—and among the Germans he had many—seized now upon this, now upon that detail, partly following up new ideas; and so led the violin manufacture in Germany into bye-paths.

After Stainer's time, we find—if the labels do not deceive us—Germans established in Cremona; for instance, the two Pfretzhners, and Fricker. From

the inscriptions upon violins, we also learn that the Germans at Cremona produced formal tests of mastership. David Techler, in Rome, Hans Mann, in Naples, and the three Gofriller (Gottfriedl), in Venice, were Germans. Whether the illustrious family of Ruger was of German descent is questionable, seeing that the name Ruger is there likewise native.

On the other hand, Italian violin makers settled in foreign countries. With the Albini, they pushed forward their outposts towards Bozen and Gratz. Others settled in London, Paris, Lyons, and Barcelona. Even in Constantinople, there lived, at the end of the 17th century, an Italian violin-maker,

who, however, was sufficiently acute to take into consideration the Oriental taste, when decorating his instruments.

As everything in this life, so the classical period of violin manufacture came to a close. Enigmatical, like its beginning, but still more sudden, was its decline. Neither for the one nor the other have we sufficient grounds for explanation. Without observing a corresponding progress in the art of violin playing we find the masters from which the epoch of violin manufacture dates, progressing to ever greater perfection. After the Duiffoprugcars, Amati, Straduari, and Guarneri, came slowly limping Baltazarini, Corelli, Tartini, and Viotti; and from the moment when

violin virtuosity reached its zenith, hardly a trace is left of Italian violin manufacture. It would seem that the power of its representatives ceased immediately on the attainment of the long sought for ideal. After Straduari and Guarneri, it still continued for a time to assert itself under several of their pupils and contemporaries; but, in the hands of the immediate successors of these latter, its degeneration became more and more apparent; and before long, the manufacture had entirely vanished. Peculiarly enough, a foreigner—the Frenchman, Michel Decouet, concluded the period which had been commenced by Germans.

The hypothesis, that the violin manufacture in Italy was founded by Germans, I have already advanced in an article in the Vienna *Presse*, of the 27th October, 1872, (reprinted in the *Gazetta de Venezia*, on the 11th April, 1873). Since that time, no facts have reached me which militate against it, but rather such as strengthen it. The following are, in brief, the grounds upon which it is based:

A mustering of instruments at the chateau of Count Lobkowitz, Eisenberg, brought to light several old lutes. Two of these, of fine workmanship, have the inscription—"Laux Maler," (Lucas Maler, the "Amati of lutes," in 1415, at Bologna); a third, to all appearance of

similar date, the name of "Marx Unverdorben a Venetia." The establishment in Italy of these undoubted German lute-makers, shows that at this period the profession was either not native, or did not occupy a like high position with that in Germany, where, in the 15th century, Johann Ott, and Hans Frei—the father-in-law of Albrecht Dürer—and the family, Gerle, all of Nurembourg, had attained to celebrity as lute-makers. With lute-making, the manufacture of bow instruments has much in common. The most celebrated Italian violin-makers —for instance, Gaspar da Salo, and Straduarius—did not disdain to manufacture lutes; while, before them, in

addition to lutes, Dardelli and the Linarollos made violas; and Duiffoprugcar, violas and violins. Indeed, there was an instrument which served to link together the two species, viz., the bow-lyre (lire d'arco). In Germany, as long as the lute remained in use, we have evidence that its manufacture was always associated with that of violins, constituting a single profession; as, even at the present day, occasional trade nomenclature shows. In France, there is no other name for the violin-maker than "luthier," which word evidently bears reference to the lute, (luthe), period. Is it then unlikely that these old German lute-makers, Lucas Maler, of Bologna, and Marx

Unverdorben, of Venice, together with the later Magno Stegher, of Venice, (a German Tyrolese—the name occurs in other German districts, with the orthography, Stöger), one of whose lutes, apparently of the time of Duiffoprugcar, I met with at the Monastery of the Augustines, Neustift, near Brixen—also manufactured violins?

Certainly not a very hazardous conclusion. But even if we argue solely with regard to the production of violins we shall be equally successful in finding a German origin.

The, as yet, oldest known violin and viola makers, are Kerlino, Dardelli, and Duiffoprugcar. To these may now be added the hitherto unknown master,

Johannes Andreas, of Verona, a viola of whose make, bearing the date 1511, I found in the Archducal Museum, Modena, at Vienna. Although a splendid specimen, its form is too grotesque to admit of the maker—whose family name still remains unknown—being ranked, by reason of this single instrument, with the professional string instrument makers. Among the above named, only Dardelli may be considered an Italian. He is believed to have lived in Mantua, about the year 1500, and to have manufactured, in addition to lutes, violas of the old description. We find no mention of him whatever as a maker of the violin proper; and, as a monk—he is called

Padre Dardelli—he appears to have followed the art more as an amateur. The two others, Kerlino and Duiffoprugcar, are of German nationality.

As regards Kerlino, of whose make, a violin—or, as some persons who have seen it declare, a viola reduced to the size of a violin—bearing the date, 1449, is still in existence, it is evident—from the initial letter of his name, which is unknown to the Italian language, that he is not of Italian descent. Judging from the root, Kerl, the bearer of the name could only have been of Breton or German origin. But how could he have been transplanted from Brittany into Italy? On the other hand, there is a great probability in favour of the

emigration of himself or family from Germany; for, at that time, the German lute-makers gravitated towards Northern Italy, as we observe in other cases. The name Gerle, or Kerle, is often met with in Germany. In the middle of the 17th century, it was borne by a celebrated organist. It is possible that Johannes Kerlino, the first of known violin-makers, was a member of the family of lute-makers, Gerle, which flourished in Nurembourg about the year 1460; and that, for the—in Italy—unpronounceable German *G*, a K was substituted. In the collection of instruments on show at the South Kensington Museum, in London, in August, 1872, there were two violins bearing

the name K*a*rlino, with the remark, "very old," but no date. It is very probable that this was the result of an error, as sometimes the a is pronounced like e in the English language. But even if this were not the case, the supposition of the German nationality of the violin-maker now under consideration must still appear well-founded, as Karl is also a German name.

This hypothesis takes a more decided form than as regards Kerlino—although the most ancient—in the case of that master who, upon the instruments made in Italy, spells his name Duiffopruggar, and on those manufactured in France, Duiffoprugcar. However enigmatical the name may

appear in this manner of spelling, the solution seems very simple when it is written according to the German orthography—Tieffenbrucker.*

Tieffenbrucker was long known by name, through a portrait engraved in 1512 by Pierre Voëirriot,† and Gerber also refers to him (Neues Tonkünstler-

* As an addition to the orthographical evidence offered by Dr. Schebek, it may be remarked that the collection of musical instruments in the South Kensington Museum includes a lute by a certain Magnus *Tieffenbrucker*, and also the photograph of a violin manufactured by Casparo *Duiffoprugcar*, presumably the father of the afore-mentioned.—W. E. L.

† In Mendel's *Musikalisches Conversations Lexikon*, now in process of publication, we read—"Gaspard Duiffoprugcar, one of the most celebrated lute and string manufacturers of the sixteenth century, was born

lexikon, 1812), but only as far as he was enabled by the existence of the portrait. Even up to the present time, it has not been possible to ascertain the particulars of his life and works. It is only known that from Bologna—the town from which his first works are dated—he was called to Paris by Francis the First, where he furnished a

in the Italian Tyrol in 1514. After having travelled considerably, he lived for a time in Bologna and Paris, but eventually settled in Lyons."

On comparing dates, the reader will immediately become aware that an error has crept into this statement; for, whereas Dr. Schebek speaks of violins of Tieffenbrucker's manufacture of the year 1511, his birth is here, curiously enough, fixed in 1514. No doubt can arise as to identity while there is such a coincidence in other respects.—W. E. L.

number of instruments for the royal orchestra; and that, later, he settled in Lyons.

Until quite lately his only known productions consisted of lutes and violas, but at the present time more and more violins of his make are gradually brought to light, placing beyond dispute his importance in creating an epoch of violin manufacture in Italy. Some have been found in St. Petersburg, Brussels, Bologna, London, Bucharest, and in several towns on the Rhine. Two of his violins, the property of Mr. Neiderheitmann, of Aix-la-Chapelle, were for a considerable time on view at the Vienna Exhibition. I here give some inscriptions from violins

that are known to me:—Gasparo Duiffopruggar Bonnoniensis Anno 1511 (the oldest), and 1517 (the latest). The violin which was formerly to be seen in Brussels, bore the date, 1539. From a bass viol the following label is quoted:—"Gaspar Duiffoprugcar à la Coste Sainct Sebastien à Lyon." A lute of the Lyons period, which I met with at the Neustift monastery, bore the simple signature:—Duiffoprugcar à Lyon.

This is not the place to enter into technical details; but, judging from the few specimens which I myself have met with, and from the description of others, it seems really a matter for astonishment that he should have done so much,

especially when we take the period into consideration, and regard either the pleasing form, the convenience of performance, the design of the separate parts, the careful choice of wood, the exquisite workmanship, or the beautiful varnish. Even the principles of the flat (flache) model, the adoption of which has added so much to the reputation of Straduarius, were present in his instruments. In the case of well preserved instruments of his make, the tone is remarkable for grandeur and sonorousness. It must, however, be remarked that Tieffenbrucker is not to be judged by a single specimen; for we perceive in the varying form and details that he—like Straduarius, during

his first period—spent considerable time in experiment.

A great peculiarity of his instruments consists in the external decoration. The neck sometimes ends in the ordinary scroll-form, sometimes it takes that of a salamander (emblem of Francis I.), sometimes that of a man's head—occasionally a representation of his own, in which thoughtfulness and energy may be traced. The breasts are generally ornamented with coats of arms in colours, or regal crowns executed in gold; the backs either with views or plans of towns (for instance, Rome or Paris), in inlaid wood work or with oil-paintings (the Madonna or other holy

persons); and for this purpose he chose real art-works for his patterns—the holy Luke or the holy John after Raphael, and the Madonna after Coreggio or Andrea del Sarta, the latter it is believed by the master himself. The beads round the edge are sometimes either singly or doubly inlaid, with or without arabesque-like figuring, and the sides of such instruments are often ornamented in a similar manner, or with devices in burnished gold,—the following thoughtful motto being frequently met with, though occasionally with omission of the first verse:—

"Viva fui in sylvis, sum dura occisa securi.
Dum vixi tacui; mortua dulce cano."*

* I lived in the forest, and was killed by the hard axe. Living, I was silent; dead, I sing sweetly.

After Kaspar Tieffenbrucker there still lived, as makers of lutes in Italy, Leonard, Wendelin, and Magnus, members of the same family—the latter until the beginning of the 17th century. Like other members of the trade, they, in all probability, also busied themselves in the manufacture of violas; but only one instrument of the kind is known to me, and that was made by Wendelin, and is to be seen in the Modena Museum in Vienna.

To render apparent the influence which the above-mentioned masters, and possibly others, of German descent, have exerted in the foundation of the classical violin manufacture in Italy, as also to show the technical

development of this manufacture from one school and one master to the other, it would require, as I have already observed, a collection of the dispersed material in a certain place, and for a certain length of time; and also a revival of the subject by the most learned men of all participating circles. We might then look forward to results such as have been already achieved in other provinces by means of special exhibitions.

From the slight historical sketch which I have here attempted to give, the reader will draw a conviction of the once honourable position which the Germans held in this branch of art. At the present day, the prospect is not

so pleasing. In the production of *quantity* the Germans are undoubtedly in advance of all nations, not excepting the French; but as regards the higher violin manufacture, they have not—with certain exceptions—made themselves in the least conspicuous; they rank in this respect not only beneath the French, but also below the English, by which nations the good method is followed, at least by a few—for instance, by the family, Lupot-Gand, of Paris, for nearly a hundred years.

In the art industries, in the strict sense of the words, noticeable endeavours have been made of late years by Austria and Germany to reach again

the position occupied by them a hundred years ago. Shall we not, then, in the violin manufacture, which, as regards object and labour, deserves to be ranked with the art industries, endeavour to follow the example of our forefathers?

THE END.

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